

REMARKS

Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2-8 and 10-26 are pending in the present application. Claims 2, 10, and 26 are the independent claims.

Claims 1 and 9 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 2, 10, 11, 15, 21, 23, and 26 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Initially, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that claims 10-12 and 21-24 recite patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. By the present Amendment, Applicant has rewritten claim 10 in independent form to include the features of base claim 1 and all of the intervening claims. Further, Applicant has amended independent claims 2 and 26 to recite features of claims 11, 21, and 23 indicated as patentably defining over the citations of record. Claims 3-8 and 11-25 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 2. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-8 and 11-26 are now in allowable form.

Claims 1-9, 13-20, 25 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,927,706 (Hiroi et al.). All rejections respectfully traversed for at least the reasons set forth above, -- namely the inclusion of subject matter indicated as patentably defining the present invention over the citations of record.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that this Amendment After Final Rejection clearly places the subject application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicants believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the instant Amendment as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues is requested under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after

this response, The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.


There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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